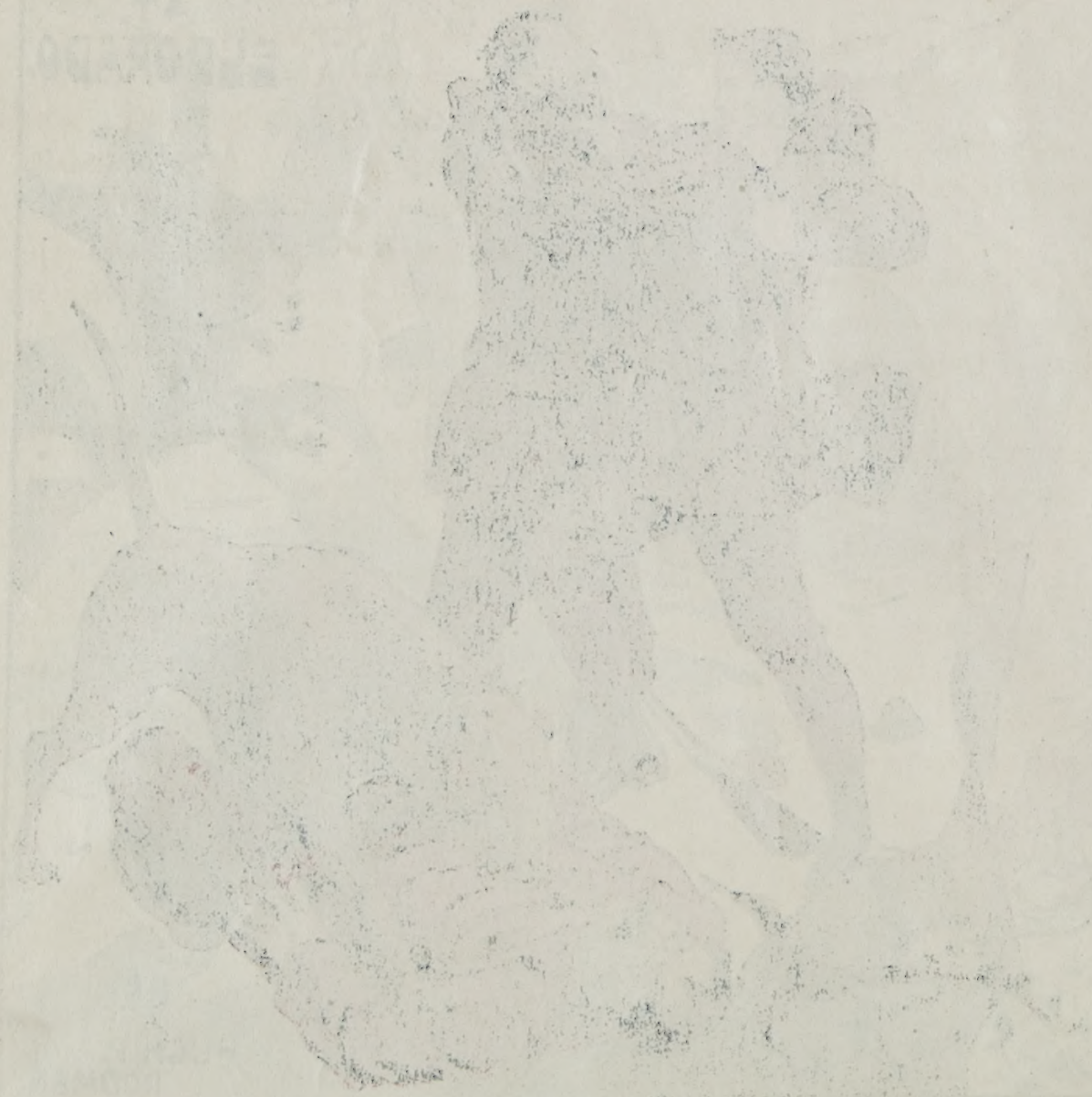


WORLDWIDE
FOOTBOOTS
PARD



KLONDIKE KIT WEEKLY

Issued weekly. Subscription price, \$2.50 per year. Entered as second class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office by STREET & SMITH.

No. 11.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 6, 1898.

Price Five Cents.



KIT FOUGHT WITH ALL THE STRENGTH THAT REMAINED IN HIS BODY.

Klondike Kit Weekly.

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Price, Five Cents.

Klondike Kit's Four-Footed Pard;

OR,

PAY DIRT AT ELDORADO.

By the Author of "KLONDIKE KIT."

CHAPTER I.

CATCHING THE GRIP—THE TAIL OF A MYSTERY—KIT ON THE WARPATH.

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

"Hi, dere, Dutchy! Wake up! You've got a bite!"

Klondike Kit's little steamer, the Full Hand, was anchored in the Yukon, just off the mouth of Indian River.

She was waiting for her owner who had gone ashore to hunt up some heavy timber for use at the new quartz claims he was just opening up.

In order to pass the time, Karl Schnapps, the engineer of the boat, had baited a trolling line and thrown it out into the water.

The end of the line he had tied to a bell in the engine room.

The fish did not seem to be biting and, after waiting an hour or more for a jingle of the bell, Karl had got disgusted and gone to sleep on an upturned keg in front of his engine.

The bell in the engine room connected with the wheel house, and enabled the pilot to communicate with the engineer.

The pilot was the boy, Spink, who was always on the lookout for a chance to play a joke on the Dutchman.

So, just as Karl got nicely to sleep, Spink yanked the bell from the wheel house and shouted out the words that open this chapter.

The Dutchman, thinking the fish line had rung the bell, sprang up and dashed out on the after deck.

"Donnerwetter!" he exclaimed, catching hold of the line and giving it a sharp tug. "I can feel him bulling at der hook so strong as nefer vas. I bed you something for nodding, Spink, dot it vas a whale!"

"Don't let him pull youse overboard!" grinned Spink, thinking what a powerful imagination the Dutchman must have.

"Py shiminy grickets, if ve don't haf

BUY DIAMOND DICK, JR.

salmon sliteaks for subber den I vasn't no brophet. He's comin' up closer, Spink! Dere he is! Wow!"

With a yell, Karl gave the line a quick pull and something heavy bounced upon the deck.

Both Spink and the Dutchman recoiled in surprise.

It wasn't a fish the engineer had caught.

On the contrary, it was a small leather satchel.

One of the sharp hooks of the trolling line had pierced the handle.

"Vell, py shinks!" exclaimed Karl. "Dot's a good one!"

"Hello!" cried Klondike Kit, climbing over the side of the Full Hand, at this moment, and throwing upon the deck an axe he had been carrying; "what have you fellows been up to?"

"Dutchy's been fishin', Kit," explained Spink, "an' he caught de grip dat's on de deck, dere."

"Do you mean to say that you hooked that out of the river?" asked Kit, in amazement.

"Dot's vat's der madder!" declared Karl. "It vas some funny dings, eh? But look here! Dot pag vas meppe full mit gold. Let's open him right away!"

Taking a knife from his pocket, Karl cut the hook out of the leather handle.

Then he picked up the dripping satchel, opened it and looked in.

An instant later he let off a wild howl, dropped the grip and rushed across the deck to the door of the engine room.

His face was as white as a sheet and his hands shook as with palsy.

"Mein Gott in himmel!" he cried, through his chattering teeth; "dake it away; kick it off der poat!"

"Wot's de matter wid youse, Dutch?" queried Spink; "youse act like youse had an attack of de jim-jams."

Spink ran over to the satchel, looked into it and gave vent to a wavering yell.

Whirling about like lightning, he made a plunge for the upper deck and never stopped until he reached the wheel house.

"Fire dat bloomin' t'ing, cull!" he shouted back; "it'll hoodoo de hull outfit if you leave it aboard."

Kit was greatly impressed with these evidences of fear on the part of his two friends.

He knew there was not a drop of cowardly blood in their bodies and he wondered what it was that could have excited them so.

Walking over to the satchel, he picked it up and looked into it.

As he looked an expression of amazement overspread his face and he put his hand into the grip and did something with its contents that sent a spasm of chills over Karl and Spink.

In a few moments, he closed the bag with a snap.

"Spink," he called out, "I want you and Karl to take the Full Hand back to The Discovery and tell Bottleneck Bill that I have blazed a dozen trees in the timber, over there, and that I want him to bring a force of men, to-morrow, and get out the logs."

"Ain't youse goin' back to de claim wid us, Kit?"

DO YOU READ ABOUT DIAMOND DICK, JR.?

"No; I have business elsewhere."

Kit walked into the cabin and when he came out, in a few moments, he carried a rifle in his hands and was followed by an immense Great Dane.

The dog was fully four feet in height and with a vicious look which would have led one to believe that his breed had been crossed with an animal more savage than Great Danes usually are.

The brute wore a collar set with steel spikes and his fear and affection for Kit was plainly evident as he followed at the young gold-hunter's heels.

The dog's name was "Biff," and he had a history.*

That history has already been told, and it will suffice to state here that, although Kit had made himself the dog's master by force of arms rather than by any kind treatment, the animal's loyalty was none the less strong and unswerving.

"Come down and row me ashore, Spink," called out Kit, picking up the grip and stepping into a little skiff that lay alongside.

"Where are youse goin', Kit?" queried Spink, as he came down from the wheel house.

"We had a caller at the cabin, last night, if you remember," returned Kit.

"Dat high-roller wot called hisself Colonel Carter?"

"Yes. He started for El Dorado Creek,

* The story of how Kit tamed the ferocious animal and made himself its master, together with other exploits on the Upper Yukon, was told in No. 10 of the Klondike Kit Weekly, entitled "Klondike Kit's Grub Stake; or, A Full Hand at Five Finger Rapids."

and Biff and I are going to make a hot-foot and try to overtake him. Pull away, Spink."

With Biff crouching in the thwarts, the skiff headed for shore.

It was a very short pull—hardly more than half-a-dozen boat lengths, and, as the keel grated upon the gravel, Kit sprang out followed by his four-footed pard.

"Do you t'ink de—de gory old t'ing in dat grip has got anyt'ing ter do wid de colonel's bizness?" asked Spink.

"I'm sure of it."

"Wot'll I tell Nugget Nell?"

"Tell her I have gone off to find the colonel, and that I'll be back to the claim to-morrow."

"All right, cull. Good luck to you. But den, of course you'll have good luck. Klondike Kit don't have no odder kind."

Kit watched Spink until he had rowed back to the boat; then he waved his hand to the boy and to Karl, and started off through the timber.

The El Dorado, Kit's destination, is a small stream flowing into Bonanza Creek; the Bonanza, in turn, emptying into Klondike River.

Excepting, perhaps, Kit's big strike on Indian River, the richest finds of the district have been made principally on Bonanza and El Dorado.

Pans as rich as \$500 have been washed out on El Dorado, and nuggets worth as high as \$235 have been brought to light.

There are only seventy claims on the creek, and from them \$1,500,000 was taken out in a single season!

In order to reach the El Dorado, Kit

GET A COLLECTION OF WAR BADGES AND BUTTONS.

was obliged to follow a trail along the Yukon for about seven miles until he came to Our Creek.

This stream he would have to ascend for eight miles and then cross a stretch of three miles to the headwaters of the creek he was aiming for.

The trail along the Yukon, at one point, scaled the side of a cliff.

There was barely room, at this place, for the passage of a loaded dog-sled, or a packed burro.

On one side was a sheer descent of one hundred feet to the surface of the river; on the other side was a perpendicular uplift of the rocky wall for double this height.

To add to the difficulties of this particular stretch, there was an abrupt V-shaped angle in the middle of it.

Kit and Biff, proceeding single file, had reached this angle when the youth heard voices on the other side.

In a wilderness like that, it is best for a traveler to consider every one he meets as an enemy until proven otherwise; and Kit crept cautiously forward, rifle in hand, until he was able to peer around the corner and see what was taking place in the trail ahead.

Two men were confronting each other in the narrow path.

One of them was mounted on a big, wiry mule and was a peddler whom Kit knew very well by sight.

The other man was an ill-looking fellow, dressed in a worn suit of fur.

As Kit listened to the conversation going on between the two, he knew there was trouble brewing, and clutched his

rifle and prepared to take a hand in the game himself.

CHAPTER II.

BLOCKING A HOLD-UP—THREE TO ONE— OVER THE BRINK.

"You're a peddler, ain't ye?" asked the man on foot.

"Yes," replied the traveler on the mule.

"Got anythin' in yer pack?"

"Not much. The boys on Quartz Creek blamed nigh cleaned me out."

"Got any weppins left?"

"Want a bowie?"

"Naw, a shootin' iron. Lost both my barkers in the river yest'day an' 'tain't safe to be loose up yar without a gun."

"I've jest got one popper left," replied the peddler; "it's a Colt, forty-four, and it'll come at two ounces."

"Let's see it," said the other.

The peddler poked around in his saddle bags till he found the gun and then drew it out and handed it to the prospective purchaser.

"'Tain't loaded!" exclaimed the man on foot, examining the weapon carefully.

"I'll throw in a box of ca'tridges," returned the peddler, pulling the ammunition from the bottom of the bag.

"All right. Load 'er up an' I'll give ye a couple of ounces for the lay-out."

The revolver was handed back to the peddler, loaded and returned to the purchaser.

"Kain't fit me out with another, kin ye?" asked the man on foot, anxiously.

"Can't do it, my friend," replied the unsuspecting peddler. "In selling you

DID YOU EVER HEAR OF DIAMOND DICK, JR.?

that I leave myself nothing but a bowie-knife and I've got a hundred ounces in these saddle bags."

"A hundred ounces?" echoed the other.

"That's what I have," responded the peddler, slapping the leather pouches.

"Then kin I trouble ye to hand 'em over?"

The man on foot drew a bead with the forty-four on the peddler and looked sternly along the barrel.

"Wh-what do you mean?" stuttered the other, turning pale.

"I mean what I say," was the grim rejoinder. "You've been accommodatin' enough to sell me yer only gun, load 'er up fer me an' tell me how much stuff you've got, an' I ain't got the heart ter plug ye an' slide ye off inter the river, although I would like ter have that mule. Fork over, pilgrim! I'm purty decent, but don't rile me!"

"Is this a joke?" faltered the peddler, just beginning to understand how he had allowed himself to be trapped.

"No, 'tain't no joke. Throw yer bag o' dust in the road an' back yer critter off inter a wider part of the trail; then I'll——"

"Break away, there, my friend," interrupted Kit, sternly, as he stepped out from behind the rocks with his rifle ready for instant use. "You're playing a neat game, but it won't work."

For convenience in carrying, Kit had strapped the mysterious satchel over his shoulder and, when the would-be robber turned, the first thing his eyes seemed to

rest on was the grip dangling at Kit's side.

Giving a gasp, he staggered back and the revolver fell clattering from his nerveless hand.

"Stranger, whar'd ye git that?" he asked, hoarsely, pointing his shaking finger towards the satchel.

"Know something about this, do you?" asked Kit, observing with considerable satisfaction that the peddler was backing his mule away into a wider part of the trail where he could whirl about and gallop off.

"I ain't sayin' I know anythin' about it," answered the fellow, sullenly, recovering a little from his surprise. "Jest asked ye whar ye got it, that's all."

"What're ye palaverin' with him fer?" came a rough voice from behind. "He's got the grip, an' that's enough. Take it away from him, Snagley."

This was the first intimation that Kit had that there were two in the gang.

Backing up to the side of the cliff, he assumed a position where he could keep an eye on Snagley while having a look at the newcomer.

Line for line, the second man had fully as bad a face as Snagley.

Both, however, seemed sadly short of weapons for the second man was armed only with a knotted club.

"Seein' the satchel is one thing, Janders," growled Snagley, "an' gittin' it's somethin' else."

"Rot!" sniffed Sanders, contemptuously; then he advanced boldly to within a few feet of Kit and stared him insolently in the face. "He kain't shoot two

DIAMOND DICK, JR. STANDS BY HIS FRIENDS.

of us at once an' you're on one side an' I'm on the other."

"Take him, Biff!" said Kit.

Janders had hardly finished speaking when Kit's four-footed pard launched himself through the air straight at his mark.

Letting off a furious oath, Janders struck wildly with his club and then slipped in the snow that lay lightly on the trail and fell with the dog on top of him.

"Now," said Kit, bringing his rifle to bear on Snagley, "what do you know about this satchel? I'm anxious for information, and if I don't have the facts out of you inside of two minutes, you'll be sorry you kept still."

Snagley moved about uneasily, but did not make any reply.

"Out with it!" commanded Kit, grimly.

Snagley consumed a little more time in desultory squirming and Kit was just beginning to finger impatiently the trigger of his rifle when a rumbling sound above his head caused him to look up.

He had barely time to catch a glimpse of a man on the heights above, to see a boulder plunging downward and to throw himself to the right.

But, although Kit's quick action undoubtedly saved his life, two broken pieces of the rushing stone struck him—one on the shoulder and the other on the arm.

His rifle was dashed from his hand and he reeled in his tracks stunned by the terrible force of the blow.

"Now you've got him, Snagley!"

yelled the man above. "Throw him over the cliff."

Snagley was not slow to follow this advice.

Leaping upon Kit, he caught him about the waist and hustled him to the brink of the precipice.

A glimmering idea of Snagley's intention flashed through the young gold-seeker's benumbed brain and he fought with all the strength that remained in his body.

But his arm and side seemed paralyzed and he was able to do little more than totter unsteadily upon the edge of the cliff.

A moment later he was hurled outward and fell spinning into the waters below.

"Why didn't ye grab the satchel?" asked the man above.

"No need of it, Patsey," shouted back Snagley. "We've jest tossed it inter the river ag'in, this time fer good. It won't bother Dirk Hawley no more. The feller it was tied to was knocked silly an' he won't come to the surface ag'in."

"Do ye know who that feller was?"

"Naw."

"It was Kondike Kit, an' if you didn't knock him out he won't do a thing to the hull passel of us, one of these bloom-in' days!"

"Murderin' blazes!" gasped Snagley.

At that instant a second form clove the air beneath the brink of the cliff.

It was Biff!

For an instant he had crouched unobserved on the edge, his bloodshot eyes trained on the surface of the river, far below.

DIAMOND DICK, JR. COSTS ONLY FIVE CENTS.

Then he leaped far out, dropped down and down, and finally disappeared in a cloud of spray.

CHAPTER III.

ON TO EL DORADO—THE COLONEL—A GHOULISH JOB.

When Kit came to himself he found that he was lying on the sandy bank of the Yukon with Biff crouching at his side and the peddler leaning over him and pressing a flask to his lips.

"How did I ever manage to come out of that mix-up alive?" inquired Kit, sitting up and rubbing his aching shoulder.

"It was the dog that saved you, Klondike Kit," replied the peddler. "They threw you over the cliff and the animal sprang after you. How he ever succeeded in getting you ashore is a puzzler, but I'll be blamed if he didn't do it."

"He can do anything, that dog," responded Kit, patting Biff's head.

Then he got up unsteadily and found that he had not yet recovered from the blow on his shoulder.

His legs were weak and were hardly able to support his weight.

Yet, despite his physical condition, he observed with no little satisfaction that he still retained the satchel.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" grumbled Kit. "I've got to make the El Dorado before night and here I am, hardly able to take a step."

"You've done me a good turn to-day, Kit," said the peddler; "in fact, if you hadn't tried to help me you wouldn't have gotten into that trouble. You ride my mule. I'll walk beside you and in

this way, you'll be able to reach the El Dorado in good shape."

"That's a bright idea, Jones," returned Kit. "Help me into the saddle."

In less time than it takes to tell it, Kit was once more on the road, dripping wet and suffering considerable pain, but glad to think that he had outwitted the three robbers and still had possession of that mysterious grip.

"Where did those fellows go, Jones?" queried Kit.

"They're still lurking in the timber, but I reckon they'll hesitate a long time before they attack us. They're armed with clubs, and nothing else."

"How about the revolver Snagley got from you?"

"I picked that up before I left the cliff."

"Have you ever seen those men before?"

"No; an' I never want to see 'em ag'in."

As he rode along, Kit fell to wondering what connection Snagley, Janders and Patsey could possibly have with the grip which Karl had fished out of the river.

He had not gone far enough into this mysterious matter, yet, to be able to answer that question, but he knew the lead he was following was bound to bring startling developments.

"Where 'bouts on El Dorado do you want to go, Kit?" asked Jones.

"I'll try for a little information at the first cabin we strike. After that, I'll be able to tell better."

The sun was still an hour high when

DIAMOND DICK, JR., IS OFTEN IN DANGER.

Kit, Jones and Biff drew up in front of Dirk Hawley's cabin.

A tall man with a military bearing, sharp, hawk-like eyes and iron-gray mustache, came out of the hut as the little cavalcade halted.

"Colonel Carter!" exclaimed Kit. "If this isn't luck then I don't know a pay-streak when I see it."

"Well, well," returned the colonel, a pleased look coming over his face at sight of the youth, "you're the last person I expected to see here, Kit. I thought I'd seen the last of you when I left your claim, this morning."

"So did I, but I have been chasing after you."

"After me? What for?"

"I believe I can help beat this little game of freeze-out that you told me last night you had run up against."

"You're a wonder, if you can. I have given up and was on the point of going back to Dawson."

"Take my advice and don't," suggested Kit. "There's pay dirt for you right here on El Dorado and you would be foolish to run away from it. Come this way," he added, dismounting and limping off toward the cabin. Suddenly he stopped. "By the way," he asked, "where's Dirk Hawley?"

"Gone down the creek."

"And we can have the cabin all to ourselves?"

"Yes."

"Good! Come in. We'll have to be quick at whatever we do."

"What's the matter with you, Kit?"

NO ONE KNOWS THE WEST BETTER THAN DIAMOND DICK, JR.

queried the colonel. "You've got a bad limp."

"It's nothing—I'll get over it by morning."

He dropped down on a bunk in the empty cabin and motioned the colonel to be seated near him on a box.

"Now, colonel," he went on, "I want the details of this game over again. As I recall the matter, you grub-staked a man in Seattle, last year, and he came north and struck it rich with a pardner, on El Dorado?"

"That's it."

"This would entitle you to a half-interest in anything the man might discover."

"That was my understanding."

"In case the man died, and left no relatives, his whole interest would come to you."

"I had never looked at the matter in that particular light, Kit."

"It is just as well to look at the question on all sides. You never saw this man you grub-staked?"

"No. A friend of mine laid his case before me and I gave the money to this friend. All I know about the man is that his name is Barry Gardner and that he has a blue anchor and the initials 'B. G.' tattooed on the back of his right hand. I told you this last night, at your claim."

"I know that, but go on—tell me the rest."

"A month ago I received a letter from Gardner saying that he had struck it rich on El Dorado and asking me if I couldn't come up. I decided to go and wrote him to that effect. By arrangement, he was

to meet me in Dawson, upon the arrival of the steamer from St. Michaels, but when I got to Dawson, Gardner wasn't there.

"I made extensive inquiries, but could find no trace of my man. It seemed to me, then, that I had been played upon by a sharper; I even thought that Gardner might be trying to freeze me out of the deal and have the entire half-interest for his own. The very idea that the fellow was trying to do me, aroused every particle of fight in my nature, so I started for this creek, determined to sift the matter to the bottom.

"Inquiries I have made convince me that there is no such man, up or down the creek, as Barry Gardner. Dirk Hawley tells me that there was a man in the diggings, up to three days ago, named Barney Gillum. His initials were B. G., of course, but that was merely a coincidence.

"So I have come to the conclusion that I have been gulled and I am about ready to pull back to the States."

"You haven't been gulled!" declared Kit; "I can assure you of that now."

"Why are you so positive?"

"That will appear later. For the present, colonel, we must advance one step at a time. Who was this Barney Gillum?"

"A partner of Dirk Hawley's."

"What became of him?"

"He died three days ago of scurvy."

"Was he buried near here?"

"Just over the rise, yonder."

Kit got up from the couch and possessed himself of a shovel and pick that lay in one corner of the cabin.

"Take this, colonel," he said, handing the pick to his companion.

"What for?" asked the astounded colonel.

"We've got to do a little digging."

"Where?"

"Just over the rise."

The colonel looked into Kit's determined face and gave a start.

"Do you mean that we're going to ——" he began.

"I mean that there's a ghoulish piece of work cut out for us, but we've got to tackle it if we're going to call this game of bluff and establish your rights. Come on, colonel."

Setting his jaws firmly together, Colonel Carter clutched the pick and followed Kit out of the house toward the rise.

Kit was still carrying the mysterious leather grip.

CHAPTER IV.

A GREWSOME TASK—BUILDING UP THE EVIDENCE—THE MISSING HAND.

The "rise," indicated by the colonel as the spot where Barney Gillum had been buried, was a flat stretch of boulder-strewn ground up the hill-side.

To this spot the two made their way and came, at last, to the rocky mound containing the remains of Dirk Hawley's partner.

Kit began resolutely throwing aside the rocks and the colonel lent a hand.

"Do you suspect Dirk Hawley, Kit?" asked Colonel Carter.

"If I'm not away off in my reckoning,

DIAMOND DICK, JR., HAS MANY HAIRBREADTH ESCAPES.

this is the identical claim in which you have an interest," replied Kit.

"I can't understand how you figure it out."

"You will have a chance to do your own figuring, colonel."

They worked on in silence until the stones were all cast aside and then set to work on the frozen clods with pick and shovel.

Very shortly a sleeping bag was uncovered.

Kneeling down in the shallow pit, Kit untied the bag at the top and drew it down over the unconscious form within.

The form was that of a bearded man, in the prime of life, but the peculiar markings of that dread disease, scurvy, the bane of the Klondike, were not discoverable.

"Scurvy did not kill this man," said Kit, "and that is the first proof of treachery."

Turning down the shirt across the man's sinewy breast, Kit discovered a wound over the heart.

"Proof number two," remarked the youth, grimly.

A stern glitter had come into the colonel's black eyes.

"If that dead man is really Barry Gardner," put in the colonel, "I can tell by looking at his right hand. It should bear the initials 'B. G.,' and contain an anchor tattooed in blue."

"You won't find it," returned Kit, "but try, anyhow."

The colonel worked gently with the still form until he had released the right arm.

Then he started up, astounded and horrified.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed; "the right hand is missing!"

"That makes a third proof of treachery," was Kit's calm answer.

"There is no doubt," murmured the colonel, thoughtfully, "that suspicion point strongly toward foul play, but it is impossible for me to prove that this dead man is Barry Gardner and my whole case hangs on that."

"Correct, colonel," said Kit. "Will you please open that satchel at your feet and examine its contents?"

"What has that got to do with this matter, Kit?"

"A good deal."

"But you brought that satchel with you, didn't you?"

"Yes. But open it, colonel."

Colonel Carter picked up the satchel, pressed a spring and sprang the top of it apart.

One look at the contents and he turned pale and staggered back.

"What do you think?" asked Kit; "aren't we building up evidence at a terrific rate?"

"Where did you get this satchel, Kit?" demanded the colonel in a hoarse whisper.

"One of my men was trolling for fish in the Yukon and brought it up on one of his hooks."

"Marvelous!"

Reaching into the satchel, the colonel took out a human hand, severed at the wrist.

The hand was unnaturally white and,

on its back, was tattooed the anchor, in blue.

Below the anchor, in red, were the two initials "B. G."

"I heard your story last night," went on Kit, "and the moment I saw that hand, marked with the anchor and the two initials, I knew that it had a vital bearing upon your mission to the Klondike."

"That's the reason I hurried after you. It is wonderful that this piece of evidence should have been thrown into my hands just at this particular time and in such a peculiar manner, but murder will out, colonel, and truth is stranger than fiction, every time."

"You are right, Kit, but I can't understand this matter at all. It's too deep for me."

"Well, then, let us suppose a case. Dirk Hawley and Barney Gillum own this claim together. Gillum's real name is Gardner, but, for purposes of his own, he changed from Barry Gardner to Barney Gillum, after leaving the States."

"Gillum has no relatives. Dirk Hawley knows this. He was grub-staked, however, by a man in Seattle, whom he has written to come on. Now Dirk Hawley is greedy and wants the entire claim because it is rich and carries pay dirt from the grass-roots down. How does he go to work to secure it?"

"We are supposing the case, remember. Three days ago, Gillum was on the point of starting for Dawson to meet the man who had grub-staked him. But he never started. He was killed and all suspicion of foul play was removed by Haw-

ley informing the other miners that his pardner had died of scurvy.

"In case the man from the States should suspect any foul play and attempt to investigate, Gillum's right hand, with its damaging testimony, was severed from the arm, placed in that satchel, and sent far up the river by three tools of Dirk Hawley's, called Snagley, Janders and Patsey."

"They threw the satchel into the river and fondly imagined that they had sunk the only proof which would entitle the grub-staker to his rightful interest where it would never be found."

"But here is the testimony, built up line for line, complete and irrefutable. Your case is a strong one, colonel."

"I am entirely convinced that you are right," replied the colonel. "This dead man is Barry Gardner and Dirk Hawley is attempting to beat me out of my rights."

"That's it! We won't accuse Hawley, just yet, of having murdered his partner, for the mere sake of securing the sole ownership of 500 feet of pay dirt, but the fact remains that this is one of the richest claims on El Dorado and the temptation would be great. What will you do, colonel?"

"Fight!" and the colonel's jaws closed with a snap.

Kit reached out, took his hand and shook it cordially.

"I like your spirit and I'll stay with you till the cards are all on the table and you have pocketed your winnings."

"Thank you, Klondike Kit. I appreciate what you are doing for me and I

YOU CAN BET ON DIAMOND DICK, JR.

may be able to return your kindness in a manner that will prove especially gratifying to you."

"Don't lose any sleep over that, colonel."

"I won't; but just now the question before us is, what step are we to take next?"

"We'll leave this pit open and, when Dirk Hawley gets back, we'll confront him with the evidences of his crime and ask for an explanation. Of course he won't be able to——"

Kit was interrupted by the sound of a rifle shot coming, apparently, from behind a large gravel-dump down by the creek and close to the cabin.

"What does that mean?" asked the colonel.

As Kit raised his head to listen he heard a voice calling his name.

"Kit! Klondike Kit! For Heaven's sake, lend a hand here! Help! here!"

"Don't move from this spot, colonel!" cried Kit, hastening down the hill toward the dump. "I'll be back in a moment."

The youth had no idea who it was that was calling him, but he resolved to find out without delay.

He had no weapons, but Biff was bounding along after him and the dog was a veritable cyclone when it came to a conflict at close quarters.

Kit could see no signs of any one, as he rounded the gravel dump.

Somewhat mystified, he started for the cabin.

At this place, not long before, he had left Jones and his mule, but the peddler

and his mount had ceased to be in evidence.

Neither was there any one in the cabin nor anywhere else about the place, so far as Kit could see.

The despairing cry for help had ceased, and, although Kit called aloud several times, no answer came to him, and he finally started back to join the colonel, very much puzzled.

Another surprise awaited him when he reached the "rise," for the colonel had vanished!

So, also, had the satchel, the missing hand, and the form in the shallow pit.

Kit was dumfounded.

While standing there, trying to account for this series of strange happenings, his name was called again.

This time it seemed to come from a patch of spruce and pine, far up the hillside.

Despite the fact that he firmly believed there was some treachery afoot, he started up the hill to investigate, hoping that he might find some clue to the colonel's whereabouts.

He had not gone a dozen steps in this direction, however, before a man stepped out from behind a large rock and stood in front of him.

It was Jones, pale and greatly excited.

"Don't go, Kit," he cried; "it's a trap! The men we had the trouble with back on the trail are laying for you!"

DIAMOND DICK, JR. IS A REAL HERO.

CHAPTER V.

THE CABIN IN THE WOODS—CAUGHT—
A FIRE AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

"How do you know it's a trap, Jones?" demanded Kit.

"Because I was behind that rock, there, and saw those three fellows carry off the man you call the colonel."

"Did they take anything else?"

"Yes," and the peddler shuddered; "they took all those—those other things that were in that hole."

"Where did they take them?"

"Up the hill, yonder, where that shout for you is comin' from. That's what makes me think it's a trap."

"I should think the colonel could have stood those three men off," mused Kit.

"I'm sure he had revolvers and I know he has nerve enough to use them."

"He has plenty of nerve, no doubt, but he had no chance. They sneaked up behind him and keeled him over with a club. Then, while he was helpless, they bound and gagged him."

"You were armed," said Kit; "if you saw it all why didn't you come to his rescue?"

Jones got red and confused and mumbled some evasive reply.

Kit knew that he was honest enough, but he was certainly a coward, and the youth felt a contempt for him.

If the peddler had had more sand in his make-up Kit would never have been thrown from the bluff, a few hours before; instead of coming to his assistance, however, Jones had made off to insure his own safety.

"Where are you goin', Kit?" asked Jones, as Kit turned and started down the rise.

"To the cabin," replied Kit.

"Well, for Heaven's sake, don't leave me here alone. Consarn it, don't you know that them three toughs would be glad to plug me for tellin' you what they had done to the colonel?"

Kit did not deign to make any reply to this, but hurried on to Dirk Hawley's log-house.

As on his previous call at the place, it was deserted, but a careful search of the walls revealed a belt with a brace of revolvers.

This was exactly what Kit was looking for, and he felt a hundred per cent. better as he buckled the strap about his waist.

"Where now, Kit?" asked Jones, who had followed the youth to the cabin.

"I'm going up the hill to have a look for the colonel," replied Kit.

"What shall I do?"

"You stay here and keep watch for Dirk Hawley. I'll leave my dog with you, and you'll not get hurt so long as he's around."

As it was rapidly growing dark outside, and Kit believed that he would have to scout into the very midst of his enemies, it would be difficult to manage Biff, and for this reason he had concluded to leave him at the cabin.

"You're doing a foolish thing, Kit," said Jones. "Those fellows will be laying for you."

"Of course they're laying for me, but if I'm not good for three hobos of the

DIAMOND DICK, JR. BREAKS THE RECORD.

calibre of Janders, Snagley and Patsey, I've got no business digging on the Klondike."

With these words, Kit slipped out of the cabin and hurried off through the darkness.

He stopped occasionally to listen, as he proceeded, but as he heard nothing to arouse his suspicions he continued on until he reached the patch of timber into which Jones had averred that the colonel had been carried.

Like most timber in the vicinity the spruce and pine were of the "scrub" variety.

The trees were small but grew thickly together, and Kit was obliged to force his way through a tangle of branches.

With a suddenness that startled him a little, he came out upon a small cleared space in the centre of which he could dimly discern the dark outlines of a cabin.

The place seemed deserted.

There was not a sound to indicate that there was any one in or about the house.

Passing quickly across the open stretch, Kit laid his hand on the door and pressed against it.

It opened without hindrance and he stepped inside.

Again he listened and the sound of some one breathing, quickly convinced him that he was not the sole occupant of the hut.

Who this other person was he determined to find out, and at once dropped down on his knees and began creeping stealthily over the floor.

But the sound of breathing was elusive.

Just as he reached the point where he thought it was located, he would hear it coming from some place else.

While he was creeping over the planks in his vain search, a section of the floor

suddenly gave way beneath him, and he was precipitated downward.

His fall was not a long one, but he landed upon something soft, and forced out of it an exclamation of surprise and pain.

"Great Scott!" muttered Kit; "what's this?"

"Klondike Kit!" cried a voice. "This is a surprise of the first order! I'm Colonel Carter, my boy, and you very nearly jammed the breath out of my body by that fall, but I'll forgive you."

"What are you doing down here, colonel?"

"Not a thing, Kit. You see, I'm tied up to the queen's taste, and couldn't make a move if I wanted to."

"You were set upon by three men, were you not?"

"That was the number. They struck me down from behind, and I had no chance to protect myself. They were desperate ruffians. Why do you suppose they treated me like this?"

"Those men are in Dirk Hawley's pay. Hawley has found out that his trickery has been discovered, and he's playing some bold game or other to get you out of the way. Have you any matches, colonel? I did have some, but lost them in the Yukon."

"You'll find a match-case in my vest pocket. It is full, I think."

Kit found the case and struck a light.

He then discovered that he and the colonel were in a pit some five feet square and perhaps six feet in depth.

It was an old cellar, evidently, and the colonel's tall form was stretched out cornerwise across the bottom.

"Turn over, colonel," said Kit, "and I'll have you free in a jiffy."

It took but a moment to relieve the colonel of his bonds, and after rising and shaking himself, he reached up and tried

HURRAH FOR DIAMOND DICK, JR.!

the plank door that gave admittance to the cellar.

"Just as I thought," he muttered; "Klondike Kit, they've locked us in."

Kit eyed the door critically.

It was hinged on the under side and opened downward.

That was why it had given way beneath Kit's weight.

This being the case, some one must have pulled the trap shut and secured it after Kit had fallen through.

"I'll fool them if they think they're going to keep me trapped in such a flimsy contrivance as this," said Kit. "We can break out of here in less than five minutes by the watch."

"Too long! If we can't break out in less time than that we're done for."

"You're right, colonel," returned Kit quietly; "I smell smoke."

"And I can hear the crackle of flames. Look upward between the cracks of the floor, Kit! The fiends have fired the house over our heads. And that isn't the worst of it."

"What more is there?" asked the youth, picking up a section of a small log that lay at one side of the pit.

"There's a keg of powder directly over us! I saw it when they lowered me down into this hole and wondered what they could be intending to do with it. Their purpose is very plain now."

"Dirk Hawley is desperate," answered Kit, beginning to pound against the planks of the trap, close to the rusted hinges. "For the few hundred thousands which your interest in the claim represents, he would sacrifice the lives of both of us. But he doesn't know with whom he is dealing. Give me a hand here, colonel. With your strength added to mine, I think we can break the door loose from its hinges."

Their united strength, applied to the

end of the battering-ram, very quickly broke the door away and it fell inward, followed by a rush of stifling smoke and heated air.

"Give me a lift, colonel," said Kit. "I'll crawl out and then help you."

When Kit reached the floor above, he found the cabin was burning fiercely.

The air was like that of a furnace and red-hot brands were falling in a shower from the roof.

"Quick, colonel!" he gasped, bending down and stretching out a hand to his friend.

A moment later and Carter was beside him.

"Ugh!" coughed the colonel, staggering from the effects of the intense heat. "It looks like an all day job with us, Kit."

Kit whirled about with the intention of making for the door, but almost stumbled over the keg of powder.

Fire-brands had fallen on the keg, and it was smoking in two or three different places.

Whipping out the flames with his cap, Kit rolled the keg to the edge of the pit and dropped it down; then he rushed to the door and found Carter hurling himself wildly against it.

"The infernal whelps have fastened it on the outside!" growled the colonel.

"You can't do anything by throwing yourself against this side of the door," said Kit, hurriedly; "it opens inward, not outward, and you're merely forcing it against the casing."

"But something has got to be done," was the gasping reply, "or we'll be sizzling here in less than a minute."

Pressing close up, Kit looked out through the chinks between the heavy planks.

He was electrified by the sight of Biff, running back and forth outside and

sniffing at the ground in an evident attempt to pick up a trail.

"Something will be done, colonel," said Kit, "you can gamble on that!"

Then he placed his lips close to one of the cracks and gave vent to a shrill whistle.

"Biff!" he called.

Kit sprang back just as a heavy body hurled itself against the door from the outside.

The door shook and creaked, and a heavy shower of spark was rained down upon the two in the cabin.

"What's that?" asked the colonel, brushing himself free of the flaming brands.

"My four-footed pard," replied Kit, "and he has arrived just in the nick of time. There he comes again!"

Once more the dog's huge body came in contact with the door and this time it almost gave way.

"Good dog!" shouted Kit, encouragingly. "Another one like that, Biff, will do the trick!"

At that instant the sound of a rifle shot broke out sharply above the crackle of the flames.

"If they've killed that dog," gritted out Kit, "I'll have the lives of all three of that miserable gang! They——"

But Biff was not killed, or even injured.

Kit was interrupted by another crash on the outside of the door, and this time it flew open and Biff dropped bruised and stunned inside the cabin.

"Noble fellow!" cried Kit, patting the dog's head. "Quick, colonel! There's not a moment to spare!"

Out of the cabin they dashed, followed by Biff.

They had almost reached the edge of the clearing when four men leaped out into the glare of the burning cabin.

They were armed with rifles and revolvers and posted themselves squarely in front of the two friends, menacing them with their weapons.

A quick glance showed Kit that three of the men were Snagley, Janders and Patsey.

The fourth man had a chocolate-colored face and looked very much like a half-breed.

"Stop!" commanded the half-breed, who appeared to be the leader of the outfit.

"Out of the way!" yelled Kit.

He sprang at the man like lightning, twisted a rifle out of his hands and dealt him a blow that sent him reeling backward.

The colonel engaged Snagley in a scientific and highly successful manner, and Biff downed Janders for a second time that day.

Patsey was doing his best to find an opening for a shot, but the mix-up was so general and so close that he was unable to do so before Kit had leaped upon him, and sent him down in a heap beside the half breed.

"Here, Biff!" shouted Kit, leaping towards the timber; "this way, colonel, as quick as the nation'll let you! Down the hill at a run. That keg of powder is due to go off and we're altogether too close for comfort."

The two friends dashed down the hill, tearing their way through the scratching undergrowth.

Barely had they reached the little rise below when there came the sound of a tremendous explosion, and a column of sparks shot upward athwart the dark.

"There it goes!" panted Kit.

"And I wonder how many of that lawless gang went with it?" queried the colonel.

YOU OUGHT TO READ DIAMOND DICK, JR.

CHAPTER VI.

A HOT SET-TO—THE CALIFORNIA PUMP
AND THE LONG TOM—DIRK HAWLEY
IN EVIDENCE.

"They all got out of that scrape with whole skins," said Kit, in answer to the colonel's question. "Here they come after us."

"Do they want a little more of the medicine we just gave them?"

"It looks like it. We'll slide down to the edge of the creek, beside the pump and the long tom, and make a stand."

"What will we do? Kill them?"

"That won't be necessary. We'll merely give them a little punishment that they won't forget in a hurry. Follow me, colonel!"

The glare from the burning cabin lighted up the surroundings weirdly, and enabled the two friends to see just exactly what they were doing.

The long tom is an arrangement for washing gold.

Water is pumped into it as into a sluice-box—in fact, the long tom is a sluice-box on an improved scale.

This particular tom was some ten feet long, shallow like a sluice-box, with its lower end cut off obliquely and covered with a lip of perforated iron.

The bottom of the box was also lined with sheet iron.

The California pump, which lifted water into the tom from the creek, thirty feet below, was merely a wide strip of extra heavy canvas, some seventy feet long.

This canvas passed around two drums, one submerged in the creek and the other at the top of the bank.

Cleats of wood were nailed across the canvas and ran through a long, narrow box extending from the bank into the creek.

When the upper drum was rotated by means of a crank, the endless strip of canvas passed through the box, and the cleats caught up the water and carried it to the long tom above.

As soon as Kit reached the bank of the stream, he wrenched the long tom loose from its supports and met a fierce onslaught from Snagley.

Snagley made use of a revolver, but the bullet glanced harmlessly from the iron end of the tom.

Before he could make further use of his weapon, Kit gave him a vigorous punch with the end of the unwieldy box, and he dropped in a heap.

Throwing the tom to one side, Kit sprang upon him, snatched the revolver out of his hand, rolled him to the edge of the bank and threw him into the creek.

"You gave me a ducking and now I'll give you one!" he muttered.

"Look out, Kit!" cried the colonel, who was busily engaged in attending to Patsey.

Kit whirled about just in time to knock aside the descending fist of Janders.

"Oh, it's you is it?" he cried, rushing Janders back toward the pump.

"Yes, it's me," snarled Janders, "an' if you're makin' a play to win, you'll find it's a hard game without the dog."

As he spoke, he grabbed up the long tom which Kit had discarded after his set-to with Snagley.

Janders was a powerful man.

The marks of Biff's teeth were still in his shoulder, and the red scars left by the dog's sharp claws were oozing blood on each side of his neck.

He was desperate to a degree and anxious to use all his great strength in crushing the life out of Klondike Kit.

The tom, weighted with iron as it was, was a wicked weapon and would have

Have You Read Diamond Dick, Jr.'s Adventures In Alaska?

defied the muscular powers of an ordinary man.

But Janders handled it as though it were made of cork.

With a wild oath, he aimed a swinging blow at Kit.

Kit dropped to his knees with the agility of a cat, and the tom passed harmlessly over his head.

The spent blow hurled Janders half around, and before he could resume his normal position, Kit sprang upon him.

A stunning blow in the centre of the right shoulder paralyzed the big fellow's arm, and compelled him to drop the tom.

Another blow, rapidly delivered under the ear, staggered him, but succeeded only in intensifying his desperation and rage.

"This is your finish, Klondike Kit!" he yelled, furiously.

Pulling himself together, he rushed at Kit like a cyclone.

Kit avoided the rush by a neat dip to the side, but a glancing blow from the giant's fist caught him on the shoulder and spun him half around.

Had that blow landed where Janders had intended it should, Kit would have been knocked into a cataleptic condition; but he escaped that fate by a hair's breadth.

The two combatants had now changed positions.

Kit was standing in front of the upper drum of the California pump, and Janders had caught his wind, whirled and was preparing for another rush.

"This time an' I'll have ye!" said the big fellow hoarsely.

"That remains to be seen."

"Mind yer eye now!"

Kit did mind his eye—minded it altogether too well, so far as his antagonist was concerned.

The second rush was successfully

dodged, and as Janders sped on, Kit gave him a right-hander in the back of the head that toppled him over the drum of the pump and sent him sliding, and turning head over heels down the canvas belt into the creek below.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the colonel, who had taken care of Patsey, and had turned just in time to witness the wind-up of Kit's clever tussle with Janders. "That's funnier than a barrel of monkeys, Kit!"

"I believe we've given this outfit a good trouncing, haven't we?"

"It's a caution if we haven't."

"Have you seen the half-breed?"

"He didn't come down on us with the rest, I guess—at least he hasn't materialized during this skirmish."

"Where's Biff?"

"He's planted himself on top of the man I downed. But, look there! Your man is trying to climb out!"

Puffing and spluttering, Janders had climbed out of the water, and up on the canvas belt of the pump.

"Turn him under, colonel!" said Kit. "Work the crank!"

The colonel sprang to the crank with a will, turned the canvas belt and sent Janders back into the creek.

"The boot is on the other leg now," chuckled the colonel, giving the crank a turn every time Janders caught hold of the belt and tried to pull himself out.

At last the big fellow gave up in disgust, howled out an oath of defiance and swam off down the creek to look for another landing.

"This is the first genuinely good time I've had since I struck the El Dorado," laughed the colonel, who had thoroughly enjoyed the scene that had just taken place.

"We've taught them a lesson," said

DIAMOND DICK, JR. IS OUT OF SIGHT.

Kit, "but I'd give an ounce of dust to know what became of that half-breed."

"Why not work our prisoner for a few tips?" suggested the colonel.

"Good idea," responded Kit, advancing to the side of Patsey. "Get away, Biff!"

The dog drew himself off Patsey's prostrate form and crouched a few feet away, eyeing him as a cat would watch a mouse.

"Will that pesky animile put his teeth inter me if I set up?" inquired Patsey.

"No," replied Kit; "sit up."

Patsey raised himself to a sitting posture, keeping a pair of frightened eyes on the dog.

"He's a tornader, that dog is! I never see anythin' like him!"

"You're right on that head, Patsey, and I'm going to let him make a meal off you if you don't answer pretty straight a few questions that I'm going to ask."

"Goin' to ask somethin' 'bout that satchel?"

"Yes—and about other things."

"S'posin' I lie to ye?"

"That will give the dog the opportunity he's waiting for."

Patsey shuddered.

"Well, play keerds. I've anted an' it's your say."

"What do you know about that satchel?"

"Nothin' much, 'cept that me an' Snagley an' Janders threw it inter the Yukon, up around Indian River."

"Just as I thought," muttered Kit.

"Then I didn't disapp'int ye, did I?"

"Who told you to throw it in?"

"Dunno."

"Be careful, there. The dog's getting restless."

"Don't ye sic 'im onter me, kase I'm tellin' the truth. Snagley's the one what said the grip was to be thrown inter the

river. Whar he got it from I don't know."

Kit was convinced that Patsey was telling the truth.

"Who told you to knock Colonel Carter down and carry him into that cabin in the timber?"

"Dunno that nuther."

"Did you get that information from Snagley, too?"

"Yep."

"Who fired the cabin?"

"The half-breed."

"What became of the half-breed?"

"I'll have ter pass."

"What became of the grip, the body in the sleeping-bag and the severed hand?"

"Pass ag'in."

"Where's Dirk Hawley?"

"Here, gentlemen!"

Acompanying the last words, the form of a heavily bearded man of thirty-five or forty, stepped forward and faced the little group.

Kit sprang back and drew his revolver.

In an instant he had drawn a bead on the newcomer.

"Then," he said, sternly, "if you're Dirk Hawley you're just the man we're after. Hands up, and no foolishness!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAW AND ORDER LEAGUE—JONES SPRINGS A SENSATION—KARL SCHNAPPS SPRINGS ANOTHER.

Dirk Hawley appeared to be very much astonished.

"Gentlemen," he asked, "what does this mean?"

"You can't run this bluff any farther, so drop it!" returned Kit, savagely.

"I fail to understand you!"

"Oh, you do!" was the sarcastic response. "Do you know who I am?"

DIAMOND DICK, JR. IS ISSUED EVERY WEEK.

"Of course; every one knows you in this district. You're Klondike Kit, and that's why your actions surprise me."

"I suppose you'll deny trying to beat Colonel Carter out of his interest in this claim of yours?"

"What do you mean?"

"That's right, tuck it on! Will you also deny trying to murder us in the attempt to carry your nefarious plan through?"

"Murder? You're crazy! What are you trying to get at?"

Hawley's nerve and self-possession were admirable, and Kit was almost baffled.

"What I'm trying to get at is this: You said your pardner, Barney Gillum, died of scurvy, and——"

"So he did."

"Not much, Hawley," put in the colonel; "he was done for with a knife."

"Impossible!"

"Why, confound it!" flared the colonel, "you told me yourself that he died of scurvy."

"I know that, but——"

"Klondike Kit and I dug the man up and found that a knife had done the work, and that there wasn't a trace of scurvy about him."

Dirk Hawley staggered back.

"If what you tell me is true," he exclaimed, "then there must have been foul play!"

"Must have been!" retorted Kit, sarcastically; "I should say so, and you must have known all about it."

"Klondike Kit," replied Hawley, sternly, "you are now making statements that are of a very grave character, and I shall demand an explanation of them."

"You've got a monumental nerve, Hawley, and that's all the explanation you'll get out of me."

"If there is any justice to be had

through the American miners on this creek, I'll get it!"

"You bet you will get it, straight from the shoulder! You have made away with Barney Gillum's remains, and you're trying to run in a big bluff, but I'll call you down if it's the last thing I ever do."

"You'd better attend to the Indian River diggin's and let El Dorado and Bananza take care of themselves," sneered Hawley. "It's too much of a job for you to be chief boss and high mucky muck of the entire Klondike."

"I'll be chief boss and high mucky muck over here just about long enough to make it red hot for you. Throw up your hands now. You tire me and are consuming altogether too much valuable time."

Kit's forefinger fixed nervously upon the trigger of the weapon he held.

The youth was known to be a man of his word, and Dirk Hawley paled a little as he raised his hands.

"Drop that weppin, Klondike Kit!"

Six men passed up in single file, through the dying glow of the cabin fire, and the first one was the leader and the one who spoke.

They were all miners, and American miners at that.

"Put 'er up, Kit, I tell ye!" said the miner again; "we've got a quorum, yere, of the Law an' Order League on El Dorado, an' I reckon we've got nerve enough and sense enough ter punish the guilty an' pertect the innercent. Hand yer guns ter me, Kit!"

"You know me—I'm Hank Bailey an' I've slept in yer cabin a dozen times an' been treated bang-up."

"Hand me you guns, too, Dirk. You know me jest as well as Kit does. Thar's a misunderstandin' here, an' we'll settle it."

Then to the colonel:

DIAMOND DICK, JR. DEFENDS THE HELPLESS.

"Have you got an interest in this little disagreement, pardner?"

"I should say I had. Kit's fighting my case for me."

"That's a little failing of his—to help other folks out. Gi'me your guns, too, if you've got any."

The colonel had one and handed it to Bailey.

"Now, then," remarked Bailey, "march fer the cabin. We'll hear this out in a place whar we kin be comfortable."

As they started off, the leader of the league saw Patsey sitting on the ground.

"Who's that fellow, Dirk?" he demanded.

"Never saw him before!" replied Hawley.

"He's one of the fellows that does Hawley's dirty work," broke in Kit; "take him along, Hank."

Patsey accompanied the rest.

When the cabin was reached, a lamp was lighted and set on the table and the miners seated themselves solemnly together with Bailey in their centre.

"Now Kit," went on Bailey, "state yer case."

Kit went over the entire affair, beginning with the finding of the hand in the satchel, and following with an account of the attempt to get the hand away from him, the discovery of Gillum's body bearing a knife wound and with one hand, and the recent effort to take the lives of himself and Colonel Carter.

"A likely yarn," sneered Hawley. "This is an elaborate game they are working to get a half interest in this claim. Have I no rights? Will you men see an honest miner beaten out of a half interest in a bonanza claim?"

"Klondike Kit has got a mighty good repertation around yere, Hawley," answered Bailey. "His story is strange, but

if Gillum was knifed, some un's goin' ter swing."

"Why did you say he died of scurvy, when it was a plain case of bowie?" asked Kit.

"I say again that it was a case of scurvy. You can prove me a liar by producing the body, and in no other way."

"I think there is another way, Hawley," came a voice, and the canvas cover of a barrel, in one corner of the room, was thrown back and Jones, the peddler, straightened into view.

Dirk Hawley was startled.

And so was Patsey.

They exchanged swift glances as Jones climbed out of the barrel and advanced toward Bailey.

In his hands the peddler carried an old fur parkie and a coonskin cap, which he cast on the floor.

"What have you got ter say, Jones?" asked Bailey.

"Klondike Kit believed that Hawley had gone down the creek, an' he left me here to watch for him.

"Kit left his dog, too, but the brute got restless a short time arter Kit went away, an' I believe he'd have torn me to pieces if I hadn't opened the door and let him go."

"The dog hadn't been gone more'n ten minutes when Hawley came. I got into that barrel an' kept quiet.

"He was talkin' with that man there, who was with him," and Jones pointed to Patsey. "He says to him, 'You take that mule an' rush the sleepin'-bag off for good and all.'"

"Then Hawley's companion went out an' Hawley rubbed up his face with some stuff that made it look dark, put on that old fur suit and was just making off when the other feller came back ag'in an' reported that the mule had run away with the sleepin'-bag.

DIAMOND DICK, JR. TO THE RESCUE!

"Hawley cussed like a pirate an' run out of the cabin follered by the chap that was with him.

"Now, gents, that mule belongs to me, and up in this country mules are mules. If Hawley was the cause of my losin' the brute, I want damages!"

A light broke in upon Kit.

So Hawley himself was the half-breed who had tried to burn and blow up the colonel and Kit at the cabin!

Kit explained the matter to Bailey and the rest.

"This is gittin' blamed serious," muttered Bailey. "Us fellers jest saw that fire an' heerd the explosion, and come troopin' down, never thinkin' we was goin' ter run onto a snag of this kind. What hev ye got ter say to all this, Hawley?"

"It's a tissue of lies. My claim is a rich one and they can pay well if they're able to beat me out of half of it."

"Things look black fer ye."

"Let them produce these remains that they're talking about. If they can do that, they prove their case; otherwise, they——"

Hawley was interrupted by a sound of great confusion outside.

Above all the pandemonium arose a voice that was strangely familiar to Kit:

"Whoa, dere, whoa! Py shiminy grickets, vat you vill do mit me, eh? You dink I vas made of rupper und dot you can blay ball mit me, und——"

There was a sudden clatter, a despairing yell and the door crashed inward.

A bewildered Dutchman shot through it, and dropped in a sitting posture on the floor with a force that shook the log building.

"Karl!" cried Kit, in astonishment.

And Karl it was.

His little derby hat was jolted down about his neck, leaving the crown hinged

with a piece of felt that he had to puff away from his face every time he wanted to speak or to see anything.

The sleeve of his coat was torn off, one shoe was gone and he presented an appearance of dilapidation and decay.

A snicker cantered through the ranks of the miners and the colonel haw, haw'd at the top of his voice.

"Dot vas mighdy funny, don't it? Vait a vile und meppe I been able to vork up a leedle laugh myself."

"Where did you come from, Karl?"

"Vell, Kit, me und der odder mule, ve dropped in togedder—und dot's all about it. Der odder mule didn't come so far like dis, but he's outside, vaitin'."

"My mule! Found!" cried the excited Jones, as he rushed out of the cabin.

"Vas dot his mule?" asked Karl.

"Yes."

"I'm habby for dot. He looks like he vas strong und able to enchoy hafin' such a cyclone to ride."

"Where did you get the mule?"

"Ve come togedder pack dere on der drail, und I got der fool idea into my headt dot it vas easier to ride den it vas to valk. In comin' der rest of der vay I must have vorked enough to valk a hundred mile! Ach, it vas great! So great it come plamed close to killin' me off."

"Was there anything on the mule's back besides yourself?"

"I didn't haf a chance to find out, Kit, dot mule kept me so busy vonderin' vere der lightnin' vas goin' to strike next."

Kit knew that something important had sent his engineer along the trail after him, but he had no opportunity, just then, to find out what it was.

There were graver matters to concern him.

"It's here," yelled the peddler, from outside.

DIAMOND DICK, JR. ALWAYS RIGHTS WRONGS.

Two or three of the miners sprang out into the darkness and returned, in a moment, lugging the sleeping-bag between them.

The bag was laid on the floor and its grewsome contents revealed.

Karl Schnapps almost had a fit.

"It's a vonder I didn't vas dead!" he groaned; "yust dink! ridin' on an eart'-quake mit all dot und never knowin' a ding about it! I vill do nodding but shake for der next veek!"

"Gentlemen," said Bailey, solemnly, "this is a clear case. Dirk Hawley——" and he turned toward the spot where Hawley had been standing, but the words died on his lips.

Dirk Hawley had vanished from among them as silently and mysteriously as though he had dropped through the floor.

In that moment of amazed confusion, Kit noticed something else:

His four-footed pard was gone, too!

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW HAWLEY ESCAPED—THE PROSPECT-HOLE—AN INTERRUPTED LYNCHING.

"Gone!" gasped a dozen voices.

"He vas thar less than two minits ago!" cried Bailey.

"He kain't be fur off!" and several rushed pell-mell from the house.

Kit, Bailey, Carter and one or two others, however, remained.

The youth and the miner seemed to be possessed of the same idea, for they both advanced upon Patsey.

"Whar'd that fellow go?" demanded Bailey, sternly.

"How do I know?" whined Patsey.

"You know blamed weil an' I'll give ye jest two minits to part with the information!"

Bailey was a grizzled Californian.

He had seen desperate times in the old

"Vigilance" days and he knew how to carry matters with a stern hand when it came to a pinch.

Drawing a revolver, he dropped down beside Patsey, and continued:

"I believe this Dirk Hawley is a thief and a murderer. Barney Gillum was worth a dozen of him and I was Barney's friend. You know whar Hawley went. Thar's no denyin' that an' it's useless fer you ter try. Tell me the truth or, by the eternal! I'll put a slug inter yer miserable body!"

"Don't shoot!" gasped Patsey. "I'll tell! He got out under there, while you was all palaverin' with the Dutchman."

Patsey pointed to a bunk that was built against the side of the cabin.

The space beneath the bunk was curtained off with canvas.

"Is there a passage out of the house that way?" asked Kit.

"Yes."

"I'll trouble you for those poppers of mine, Bailey," said the youth.

"And I'll ask you for my Colt, too," added the colonel.

"Sure thing, gents," replied Bailey, handing over the weapons. "Sorry I had ter take 'em away from ye, but bizness is bizness an' justice is justice. If I do say it, this is the fust time the dove of peace has ever moulted a feather on El Dorado." Dropping on his knees, Kit crawled under the bunk and out through an opening between the logs of the wall.

The colonel was close behind him.

"That Hawley is a game one," remarked the colonel.

"He's making a hard fight to beat you."

"Nevertheless, we seem to have knocked him out. Have you any idea which way he fled, Kit?"

Kit was examining the ground.

There were patches of snow scattered

DIAMOND DICK, JR. IS A DANDY.

here and there and occasionally he ran upon a footprint which he believed to be Hawley's.

"The indications are that he went in this direction," replied Kit. "It's a lucky thing that the moon has come up. That makes it possible for us to trail him for a short ways through these patches of snow."

Steadily, foot by foot, almost step by step, they followed the faintly defined imprints made by Hawley's feet as he fled from the cabin.

What served to identify the marks, to Kit, was the fact that Biff's big paws had left a trail on every patch of snow crossed by Hawley's muc-lucs.

Kit and the colonel came, finally, to a point some distance up the hillside from which every particle of snow had blown away.

"Now, what?" asked the colonel, anxiously.

"Now we will have to call in the assistance of my four-footed pard."

"Do you mean that big dog of yours?"

"Yes."

"Is it possible that he followed Hawley?"

"It's an absolute certainty. Didn't you notice the prints of his paws along the trail?"

"No. I presume my eyes were not sharp enough."

Placing his fingers to his lips, Kit gave vent to a shrill, tremulous whistle.

It was a signal that Biff knew well.

There was no answer to the whistle and Kit tried again.

This time a faint answering yelp was borne to them from the distance.

"When we locate that bark, colonel," said Kit, starting off, "we'll have our man."

"A wonderful dog, that, Kit!" ex-

claimed the colonel, filled with admiration. "I'd like to buy him from you."

"Your half of Hawley's claim wouldn't touch him," replied Kit; "and that goes to show how much I think of Biff. I risked my life in taming that dog's rebellious spirit and I have an idea that that is the reason he thinks so much of me. He has saved my life at least once on this trip by pulling me out of the Yukon."

"In addition to that, he saved us both at that burning cabin!"

"We might have got out of there, by a scratch, without his help—but that was a great act he did, for all that. He's a short-haired dog, and such animals are a little out of place in this cold country. When the thermometer gets sixty below, however, I'll dress Biff in a suit of seal if it's necessary to do so to keep him comfortable."

A few minutes' climb up the slope brought the two friends to a smooth stretch of ground where the crouching figure of Biff could be plainly seen in the moonlight.

The dog was lying prostrate with his head between his front paws.

But Dirk Hawley was nowhere to be seen.

"Strange!" muttered Kit.

"Perhaps Hawley wounded the brute so that it is impossible for him to move?"

Kit hurried forward and the mystery was quickly made clear when he reached Biff's side.

Directly in front of the dog was a prospect-hole, several feet in depth.

By some mischance Hawley had tumbled into this hole.

He could not get out for, every time he attempted to do so, a ferocious growl from Biff warned him to remain where he was.

"Trapped!" chuckled the colonel,

DIAMOND DICK, JR. GOES ON THE TRAIL.

looking down at Hawley's upturned face; "we were in a hole a while ago, Mr. Hawley, and you're in one now."

"Call off the dog!" begged Hawley; "I never saw such a ferocious brute."

"I'll call him off in a few moments," replied Kit, firing his revolver twice in the air as a signal to Bailey and the rest. "It would be better to keep you in there until your neighbors get here."

An answer to the shots came floating up from below in the form of a hail from Bailey.

"Got him, Kit?"

"Yes."

"Then we'll be up there on a double-quick."

"Look here, Kit," said Hawley, "don't let that outfit string me up."

"Why not? Don't you deserve it?"

"No! I swear to you that I did not kill Gillum!"

"Was Barney Gillum your partner's real name?" asked the colonel.

"His real name was Barry Gardner."

"Why did he change?"

"He changed because he had done something shady in the States—something, he said, that he always repented of. He declared that he was going to take a new name and lead an honest life. And he did, for if ever a man guarded the interest of a grub-staking pard, he guarded yours, Carter."

"You admit my right to a half interest in this claim, then?"

"Yes! And I declare to you that I would not have tried to freeze you out of it, had not fate seemed to throw everything right in my way."

"On the day Barney was to start for Dawson to meet you, he was murdered in front of my cabin. I caught the murderer and he suggested the whole plot that I have been carrying out."

"In a moment of weakness I fell in with the plan, but I regret having done so—regret it with all my heart."

"It's a pity regret didn't strike you before you attempted to blow us up in that cabin," put in Kit, drily.

"They're coming, they're coming," faltered Hawley. "Will you save me, Kit? Say that you will!"

The man was in abject terror.

"I may be able to save you, but perhaps I can take you down to Dawson and turn you over to the mounted police. That will give you a chance for your life and you will have the opportunity to prove your innocence."

At this moment Bailey came to a panting halt beside the prospect-hole.

"Did the dog capture him?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Bully for the dog!"

Turning, he looked at the men hurrying up from below.

"Hustle, boys, hustle!" he cried.

"Got the rope, Tracy?"

"Yep."

"Come out, Hawley! Thar's no tree handy but we'll put the rope around yer neck an' drag ye to the nearest timber."

Hawley climbed out of the hole while Kit laid a restraining hand on Biff's collar.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Bailey?" asked the colonel.

"Stranger to the way things are done in the diggin's, ain't ye?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll explain that Jedge Lynch is goin' ter hold a brief session. Thar'll be a necktie social an' Mr. Hawley is goin' ter be the central figger."

"Don't you think that this is a little contrary to law?"

"Law be hanged! Why, man, it is the law."

"There are mounted police down at Dawson."

"S'posin' thar is?"

"I would like to suggest that this man be taken down there and given a trial before the commissioner."

"That 'u'd make a lot of expense that ain't necessary."

"It would look better."

"Blame the looks. But see yere, Mister What's-ye-name, you jest take a back seat an' keep yer mouth shut. We won't have no interference."

The colonel breathed hard and gritted his teeth, but he plainly saw that neither Bailey nor his men were to be trifled with in their present temper.

"Go over to him an' put that rope around his neck, Simms!" commanded Bailey.

Simms started to obey the command

DIAMOND DICK, JR. KNOWS HOW TO USE HIS FISTS.

but Klondike Kit stepped in front of him, the moonlight glinting on a brace of revolvers which he carried, one in each hand.

"Stop, Simms!"

Kit's voice was stern and determined.

He was as eager as any one to see the guilty punished but he firmly believed that there was a possibility of Dirk Hawley's being innocent of the crime of murder and he was prepared to meet force with force, if need be, in order to give Hawley a chance for his life.

At Kit's command, Simms halted and started back.

For a brief moment there was silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of the men.

"'Tain't possible!" gasped Bailey. "Klondike Kit, hev ye gone mad?"

"I hope not, Hank," replied Kit, calmly; "but I'm going to prevent you men from doing a deed you may possibly regret."

"Why, you brought the charge ag'in Hawley an' you proved every detail of it, an' he stands convicted of one of the meanest crimes on the record—killin' a pardner! Think of that, men! Killed a man that he bunked with, ate with, worked with! Killed a man that trusted him!"

Bailey was working his men up into a dangerous pitch of frenzy and Kit hastened to interrupt him:

"There has been no proof adduced to show that Dirk Hawley killed Gillum."

"Wouldn't Hawley profit by havin' his pard out of the way?"

"Undoubtedly—if he worked it right."

"Didn't he try to work it right?"

"Yes."

"Ain't that a proof that he knifed Gillum?"

"No."

"Bah! It's proof enough fer us, ain't it, boys?"

"Yes!" yelled the men.

"Git out of the way, Kit!" commanded Bailey; "we're going to hang Hawley."

"Not while I'm alive and able to protect him!"

Colonel Carter edged around until he stood shoulder to shoulder with Kit.

Biff, also, lined himself up beside his master.

Opposed to these three stood Hank Bailey and his five companions.

Karl Schnapps and Jones would have enabled Kit's party to make a very respectable showing, but the Dutchman and the peddler were not in evidence.

"Thar's jest three on your side, countin' the dog, to six of us," said Bailey; "that's two to one, Kit, an' you've got sense enough to know that you'd have ter knock under."

"I've faced greater odds and been successful," was the cool reply.

Bailey knew that and showed a desire to temporize.

"What's yer object fer actin' this way, Kit?"

"I've got an honest doubt in my mind about Hawley's killing Gillum. That's what you want to hang him for, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"In addition to that, I have some friends among the police, in Dawson, and this is a matter for them to handle."

"Want to take him down to Dawson, do ye?"

"That's what I would like to do."

"Wal, if ye do it, ye've got ter fight, that's all. Pull yer guns, boys!"

Matters were rapidly approaching a crisis.

As Bailey gave his command, he whipped out a brace of forty-fours and Kit and the colonel were quickly facing a threatening array of muzzles.

"If there's bloodshed over this matter, Bailey," said Kit, "you'll regret it."

"I don't think I'll regret it half as much as you will. If you don't break away from Hawley, there, before I count three, we'll fire. Ready, boys!"

Muscular hands gripped revolver-stocks with nervous impatience.

"One!"

Forefingers slid along the guards and flexed upon the triggers.

"Two!"

Every man braced himself for the ordeal which he believed was to come.

But, just as Bailey was framing his lips to utter the final and fatal "Three!"

MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF DIAMOND DICK, JR.

there came a shout and a man reeled among them from out of the darkness.

"Hold! Don't shoot!" cried the man, gaspingly; "Hawley is innercent of the murder of Gillum! Hear what I've got ter say! I've——"

His voice faded away into silence and, with a hollow groan, he dropped down on the rocks.

The man was Snagley.

CHAPTER IX.

SNAGLEY AND JANDERS—HOW GILLUM WAS KILLED—BAILEY IS SATISFIED.

Snagley's words were a signal for the opposing forces to put away their guns.

Kit and Bailey knelt down beside Snagley and found that he was bleeding profusely from a wound in the breast.

"As near as I kin make out," muttered Bailey, "it's an all day job with this chap."

"Has any one got a flask of whisky?" asked Kit.

A flask was handed to the youth and he forced a swallow of its fiery contents down Snagley's throat.

In a few moments the wounded man revived.

"Was you fellers tryin' ter hang Hawley?" inquired Snagley, in a faint voice.

"That's what we was goin' ter do!" was Bailey's gruff reply.

"Fer killin' Barney Gillum?"

"Yes."

"Well, Hawley didn't kill him."

"How do we know that you ain't lyin' jest ter save Hawley's life?"

"Look yere, pardner, I'm dyin' an' what good would it do me to lie to save anybody? I'll give ye the facts, an' if ye don't believe 'em, an' go on with this lynchin', you'll be committin' murder."

"Yer voice rings true, pilgrim," said Bailey, much impressed with Snagley's words and manner. "Say what ye got to an' be quick erbout it. It looks to me as though ye might not hev time ter git it all out."

"Wal, here goes," went on Snagley, after taking another swallow from the flask. "Ten minits ago Janders an' I had a rip-up down by the pump. We argued the diffikilty with bowies an' I stiffened

him out, but just as he fell, he gave me this slash that's ter prove my finish. After ye git through with me, ye'll find Janders down by the creek."

"We don't keer a rap erbout Janders, or you," said Bailey; "what we want to know is, who knifed Gillum?"

"I'm gittin' down to it. Janders, Patsey an' me worked fer Hawley an' Gillum. Janders quarreled with Gillum an' had it in fer him. He laid low an', erbout three days ago, jest as Gillum was on the p'int of startin' fer Dawson, Janders sneaked up behind him an' squared accounts."

"Jest as Janders was about leavin' the scene, Hawley came out of the cabin an' grabbed him. Fer a minit everythin' looked purty black fer Janders, but Janders allers kerried his head with him, an' he argued with Hawley and showed him a plan for beatin' Gillum's pard out of his grub-stake interest."

"Hawley fell in with the scheme and, as Patsey an' I got onto it, they had ter take us in. Them's the facts, an' I'll swear to 'em. Hawley had no more ter do with that murder than I did."

Snagley's last words were spoken almost in a whisper and, when he finished, he stiffened out and lay back on the rocks, completely exhausted.

"That feller may be a nat'ral born liar," said Bailey, "but he's told the truth this time."

"There's no doubt of it," assented Kit.

"Dirk Hawley didn't kill Gillum, but he's played it mighty low down on you, Kit, an' the man ye got with ye."

"That's our affair," put in Colonel Carter, "and I guess we'll be able to settle that with Hawley."

"I hope so."

"Snagley," spoke up Kit, "was it Janders who suggested removing Gillum's right hand and throwing it into the Yukon?"

There was no answer and when Kit bent over to find out why Snagley did not reply, he found that he was dead.

"That's two purty tough citizens that have been taken off the El Dorado in the last fifteen minits," remarked Bailey.

"I can answer your question, Kit,"

DIAMOND DICK, JR. CAN'T BE BEAT.

put in Hawley. "The entire plan emanated with Janders. He had it worked out in every detail. Janders removed the hand, put it in the satchel and volunteered to get rid of it."

"Wal," said Bailey, getting ready to move off, "I reckon I'm satersfied if the rest of you boys are."

The remaining five miners declared that they thought the principles of the Law and Order League had been thoroughly vindicated.

"Then we'll slide back to our shanties," continued Bailey. "No hard feelin's, Kit?" he asked, extending his hand.

"None at all, Hank; but I'd like to give you a piece of advice."

"Ye kin give it, if ye want to. Whether I take it, or not, is a horse of another color."

"The quicker you realize that there is a force of mounted police at Dawson who are able to deal with the criminal affairs of the district, the better it will be for you. Your league has outlived its usefulness and is liable to get you into trouble."

"Thank ye fer nothin', Kit. I reckon the league 'll stand as long as thar's a man in it able to kerry a gun."

With this parting shot, Bailey and his five companions filed off into the darkness.

"Klondike Kit," said Hawley, when the others had gone, "you and Colonel Carter have done me a good turn to-night."

"Don't thank me," returned Kit, coldly. "I didn't do it on your account. It was my own sense of justice that impelled me to act as I did."

"My sentiments, exactly," supplemented the colonel; "you've tried to beat me out of my half interest in this claim, Hawley, and you did your best to take my life as well as Klondike Kit's. I don't know how you could expect us to have any regard for your neck."

"I deeply regret the part I took in this matter. I only hope that you gentlemen will not proceed against me. If you did, it would be an easy matter for you to run me out of the country."

"I'm not here to run anybody out of the country," answered the colonel.

"Just now, however, I want to talk business with you for about ten minutes. Shall we return to the cabin?"

"If you desire it."

As they turned and started toward the log-house a shrill yell broke on their ears, followed by the words:

"Dere it is! Take dot! Und dere's anudder to go mit it. You bed my life I vas a hot ding und——"

A revolver shot interrupted the Dutchman's remarks and Kit ran down the hill at the top of his speed to find out what was the matter.

CHAPTER X.

THE COLONEL SHEDS OUT—HIS PRESENT TO KIT—CONCLUSION.

When Kit reached the cabin, a peculiar scene was spread out before his eyes.

The cabin door was open, and in the flood of light that streamed through it he saw Karl Schnapps sitting calmly on the prostrate form of Patsey.

"You can't get away, Misdar Man," said Karl, "dot was imbossible. I veigh ofer doo hundred, und I vas a reg'lar pile-driver ven it comes to a knock-out."

"What have you been doing, Karl?" asked Kit, stepping forward.

"I haf been watching dis feller und he has gifen me a lot of drubbles. Ve had a leedle set-to mit der fists und den he fired at me mit a gun, but I dodged der pullet. I saw dot piece of lead comin' right for me und I ducked my head und missed it by about doo inches. Den I fell down on der chap vat shot at me und here he is."

"Don't bother with him, Karl; let him go."

"Let him go is it?" echoed the Dutchman; "yust after I haf been fightin' like der plazes to keep him here?"

"We don't want him. Get up and see that he gets a good start for the timber."

Karl got up and, as Patsey started off, he helped him along with the toe of his muc-luc.

"Now, then, Karl," said Kit, "what brought you after me? Is there something wrong at the Discovery?"

"Someding? Everyding! Pottleneck Pill is in a bushel of droubles."

"Oh, it's Bill, is it? Well, he's always

DIAMOND DICK, JR. IS A DEAD SHOT.

getting into trouble. What's the matter now?"

"He has been run off already by a gang of Stick Indians, and dey're holdin' him a brisoner somevere ofer on der Habby-Go-Lucky."

"What did Bill do to get the Indians down on him?"

"I didn't haf der dime to find dot out. Nugget Nell yust told me dot, und sent me after you so fast as I could come. Dot's vy I'm here."

The Sticks were a superstitious and fanatical lot, and Bottleneck Bill's predicament might be a very serious matter.

Kit resolved to give his partner his first attention as soon as this little incident on El Dorado was satisfactorily cleared away.

That was now but a matter of a very short time.

A moment later, Colonel Carter and Hawley reached the cabin and they all went inside.

Kit explained to the colonel the cause if the shot they had heard, and added the information that he had given Patsey his freedom.

"That was proper, Kit," said the colonel. "That fellow is the last of a bad lot and the El Dorado will be better off without him."

Carter seated himself and turned to Hawley.

"Hawley," he went on, "the deal between you and me seems to have simmered down to this:

"We're pardners in the ownership of this claim, but the El Dorado diggin's are altogether too small to hold both you and me.

"Every time I look at you I feel an almost irresistible inclination to twine my fingers about your throat and choke the breath out of your miserable body.

"Of course, that's the wrong way for pardners to feel toward each other, and, as it will be impossible for us to run this claim together, without fatalities, I move that you name a figure for which you will either buy or sell."

"I have done wrong, I admit," said Hawley, who seemed thoroughly cowed and repentant, "but if I name a figure, and you should conclude to sell, will you

and Kit keep to yourselves the details of the affair that has just happened? If they were known, I would be run out of the district."

"I will answer for what I know," returned Kit, "but Bailey and his men are also conversant with the facts."

"I shall have to take my chances on them—but they do not know everything connected with the deplorable affair."

"So far as I am concerned," put in the colonel, "I will tell nobody. But name your figure, Hawley."

Hawley took a piece of paper from his pocket and figured for a few moments.

"Two hundred thousand, give or take," he finally said.

"What shall I do, Kit?" asked the colonel.

"Take," was the brief response.

"I accept your offer, Hawley," said the colonel, but illy concealing the satisfaction he felt at the offer of so large a sum.

"I am prepared to hand over the dust," said Hawley.

"The sole condition I impose is that the dust be delivered to me at Dawson," replied the colonel.

"I will see that it is delivered to you there, one week from to-day," answered Hawley. "The papers can then be made out in legal form."

"Well," put in Kit, "if this is all settled to your satisfaction, I'm going to turn in and sleep for a couple of hours. Then I've got to start back post haste to the Discovery."

"Why your hurry?" asked Carter.

"My engineer has brought me word that Bottleneck Bill got into a mix-up with the Stick Indians and they have run him off to their camp on the Happy-Go-Lucky. I don't think the matter is very serious, but it might easily become so."

"Is their camp on the Happy-Go-Lucky?" echoed the colonel.

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"I'll tell you in the morning before you start, Kit."

Kit was a little puzzled at the colonel's words, but was too worn out and tired to think much of the matter just then.

DIAMOND DICK, JR. IS A FINE FELLOW.

Turning into one of the vacant bunks, he dropped off to sleep and was awakened at daylight by Karl.

"Ain't it about time we struck the trail, Kit?" asked the Dutchman.

"I should say so," replied Kit, springing up.

On the table Karl had set out some pork and beans, apple-sauce, crackers and coffee and the colonel was already seated and waiting for Kit.

Beside his tin plate was a small canvas bag such as prospectors sometimes use to hold specimens of quartz.

"Come on, Kit," said the colonel. "I want to have a little talk with you while we are eating."

Kit was soon at the table beside his two friends.

"As I understand it," continued Carter, "it is impossible to do any mining in this country until you burn wood on the ground and thaw it out."

"Your understanding is correct, colonel."

"Wouldn't coal be a good thing to thaw out the ground with?"

"Excellent—if we had it."

"Well, Kit, I'll tell you where you can get it."

Opening the canvas bag the colonel took out two or three pieces of soft coal of excellent quality.

"At Stickeen Bluff, on the Happy-Go-Lucky, there's a twenty-foot vein of that kind of fuel."

Thrusting a hand into his breast pocket, Carter drew out a folded paper.

"There's a description of the ledge and all information concerning it. I'm an old coal miner, Kit, and have had years of experience in Pennsylvania, Virginia and the south, and I want to tell you that this vein will be more valuable than a gold mine."

"I found it myself, on the way here, and I herewith make you a present of the discovery. It will be of value to you in the extensive operations which you are planning on Indian River. By your clever work you have made me a winner by two hundred thousand, spot, and I trust you will not hurt my feelings by declining this tender which I make you."

"Certainly, colonel," replied Kit, "I will accept the gift. If you are going out of the country the coal mine would be of no use to you, and I can make it extremely useful to me. You have paid me a dozen times over for everything I have done for you."

"Nonsense!" answered the other; "I haven't paid you back a tenth part."

"By the way," queried Kit, "where is Hawley?"

"He went away early to make arrangements for having the bullion he's going to turn over to me packed to Dawson."

"Are you going to start soon?"

"I shall leave here ten minutes after you do."

In a short time they parted, clasping each other's hands warmly and exchanging cordial good wishes.

Kit and Karl had covered several miles of the back trail when a sound of beating hoofs struck on their ears.

The sound was so unusual in that section, where horses were very scarce, that the two travelers stopped and listened, while Biff pricked up his ears and showed his teeth viciously.

The dog painfully scented trouble and, as the thud of hoofs grew louder and louder, Kit and Karl stepped to one side of the trail and waited.

An instant later and Jones' mule galloped into sight.

The saddle was empty and the two friends thought, for a moment, that the animal had escaped from its owner.

But they were quickly undeceived.

A rope was tied to the saddle-bow and Jones was made fast to the end of it.

As the mule galloped along, the unfortunate peddler was being dragged after, his head coming within dangerous proximity of the flying hoofs at every leap.

"Py cracious!" exclaimed Karl; "the feller was in a mighty hard place."

"Biff!" exclaimed Kit, as the mule drew close to where they were standing; "stop him!"

The dog crouched low until the flying animal reached a point exactly opposite his position, then he sprang out and caught the dangling bridle-reins between his strong jaws.

DIAMOND DICK, JR. HAS HOSTS OF FRIENDS.

Biff was dragged along the trail, but the mule's pace was slackened so that Kit was able to run forward and assist in bringing the animal to a complete stop.

While Karl held the mule, Kit cut Jones loose and was astounded to find that he was merely stunned a little and slightly bruised, but with no serious injuries.

The "tundra," or moss, with which the trail was thickly covered, had undoubtedly saved the peddler's life.

"Who tied you to the mule, Jones?" asked Kit.

"The fellow you called Patsey."

"How long has the mule been yanking you along in this way?"

"It can't be more than two or three minutes, but it seems like two or three hours. That villain set upon me, back there, and said he'd play even with me for all his bad luck. I guess he would, if that mule of mine had ever reached the rocky part of the trail. I feel as though every bone in my body was broken, as it is."

"Where did you go last night?"

"After what I said against Hawley, I knew it wouldn't be healthy for me to linger in that neck of the woods, so I pulled out as soon as I got hold of my mule. I stopped all night at a camp farther down the creek, got a bright and early start for Dawson and ran plump into that fiend, Patsey. But I fooled him," and Jones winked his eye and gave a sickly grin; "I played even for that hold-up he attempted."

"How's that?"

"Patsey ran off with my saddle-bags. He thinks they're stuffed with nuggets, but they're full of rocks. I cached the gold in order to be on the safe side, and I'll dig it up on my next round of the camps."

"Good for you!" exclaimed Kit.

"Where are you going now, Jones?"

"To Dawson, straight."

"Do you feel well enough to make the trip?"

"I'll stand it, all right. Here's the Dawson trail and I'll have to break off. Good luck to you, Kit!"

"Same to you!"

And Kit waved his hand as the peddler swung himself into his saddle and started off on the Dawson trail.

Kit and Karl reached the Discovery late that afternoon, and Kit found that he was badly needed there.

Bottleneck Bill had gotten himself into a peculiar predicament and Kit found that his rescue was a far more difficult matter than he had imagined.

The village of the Sticks lay near Stickeen Bluff, on the Happy-Go-Lucky, not far from the spot where Colonel Carter had discovered the vein of coal.

Nell believed that Bill had been taken to the Indian village, and Kit, at first, inclined to this belief; but he had not gone far on this trail before he struck into another which led him far from the Happy-Go-Lucky.

It proved to be a blind lead and he ultimately lost it, but he was led into a series of strange adventures among the superstitious natives of the country that called for a display of all his skill and courage, and finally resulted in the rescue of Bottleneck Bill.

The story will be told in No. 12, of this Library, to be entitled, "Klondike Kit's Lost Lead; or, A Fracas at Fort Get There."

[THE END.]

SPECIAL NOTICE!

Owing to the fact that some of our publications are printed considerably in advance of issue, it was impossible to begin our badge and button premium offer in all on a simultaneous date. Our readers are notified that all copies of the Tip Top Weekly, Starry Flag, True Blue, Diamond Dick, Jr., Nick Carter Weekly and Klondike Kit, dated June 25, 1898, or later, are available under this offer (see page 32), and should you have copy of any of these dated June 25 or later, and WHICH CONTAINS NO COUPON ON PAGE 32, cut out the heading and date from the front cover, and it will be accepted by us in lieu of a coupon under the conditions of the offer. Headings will not be accepted as coupons where the coupon is published on page 32 of the same number.

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